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# No Lost Generations: Refugee Children and Their Human Right to Education, From the Holocaust to the Syrian Civil War

Jessica Warner  
[jessib11@uw.edu](mailto:jessib11@uw.edu)

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No Lost Generations:  
Refugee children and their human right to education,  
from the Holocaust to the Syrian Civil War

Jessica Warner

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies  
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Committee:  
Dr. Elizabeth Bruch; Dr. Elizabeth Sundermann

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School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences

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University of Washington

Abstract

No Lost Generations:  
Refugee children and their human right to education,  
from the Holocaust to the Syrian Civil War

Jessica Warner

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:  
Assistant Professor Dr. Elizabeth Bruch  
Politics, Philosophy, and Public Affairs,  
a division of the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences

International law protects the right to education for refugee children, as is stated in multiple treaties and documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990). The purpose of this research is to highlight the historical development of education for refugee children, through programs led by Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), as well as to emphasize the importance of education as part of current humanitarian interventions. This thesis examines a past example of children as refugees, centered on Jewish children located in displacement camps in the aftermath of the Holocaust, and how the issue of their education was handled by newly-formed IGOs. Legal frameworks are explained in regard to how international law protects the rights of child refugees, as well as theories of educational pedagogy. Contemporary examples focus on educational opportunities for Syrian refugee children living in United Nations-operated camps in Jordan, as well as opportunities post-resettlement in the United States. Traditionally all

humanitarian aid consists of three key “pillars”, where the focus is on food, medicine, and shelter. The international community has recognized that education is a fundamental right, but more must be done to ensure that it is better funded and included in all emergency responses. This can be achieved by incorporating education as the fourth pillar of humanitarian aid.

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## Introduction

### *Statement of the Problem*

Global statistics tracking the forced migration of people around the world have continuously trended upward in recent years, and show no signs of changing. The numbers are mind-boggling; the most recent United Nations estimate states that 21.3 million people are refugees, the highest number on record.<sup>1</sup> The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that “the vast majority of the world’s refugees – 9 out of 10 – are hosted in the global South, led by Turkey, Pakistan and Lebanon, and half come from just three war-torn countries – Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia”.<sup>2</sup> If the thought of 21.3 million individuals forced to flee their homes wasn't staggering enough, 51% of these individuals are under the age of 18: over ten million children around the world are refugees. While conflicts continue to rage on, our global society is at risk of allowing entire populations of children to go uneducated. Not only are young refugees having their childhoods taken from them, but without being able to fulfill their human right to education, their futures look bleak, as well.

International law protects the right to education for refugee children, as is stated in multiple treaties and documents including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention Relating the Status of Refugees (1951), the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966), and the Convention of the Rights of the Child (1990). This problem, and the effort to solve it, has taken on the moniker “no lost generation”, meaning that

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “UNHCR Figures at a Glance.”  
<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, “Global Trends in 2015.”  
<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/global-trends-2015.html>.



the world cannot stand by while children forced to flee conflict-plagued areas become further removed from educational opportunities. Without this generation of child refugees receiving even the most basic of educations, large portions of the world will face a future without the doctors, lawyers, engineers, and teachers needed to rebuild their nations. In the face of this bleak prediction, state governments, United Nations agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and private donors have joined forces behind the No Lost Generation initiative to end this educational crisis for Syrian refugee children.<sup>3</sup>

Traditional humanitarian responses have been based on three key “pillars”, which are food, medicine, and shelter. Less than two percent of humanitarian funding is spent on education, although it is viewed as one of the most promising pathway to non-violent conflict resolution and reconstruction.<sup>4</sup> Food, medicine, and shelter are essential to any humanitarian response, but educational opportunities are just as critical. Recently there has been a push by some members of the international community to prioritize education and make it the “fourth pillar of humanitarian aid,” which is the idea this thesis is founded upon. The “fourth pillar” rationale argues that without children being educated, we as human beings run the risk of creating a future where development stagnates, and chaos, violence, and impunity spurred on by lack of knowledge run rampant. Every single child, no matter where they are from or what circumstances surround them, must receive an education to realize the full potential of what they are capable of achieving and contributing to society, and to prevent a vicious cycle of global violence. Even without wide-

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<sup>3</sup> No Lost Generation, “Partners.”  
<http://nolostgeneration.org/partners>.

<sup>4</sup> Hayley Mackinnon, “Education in Emergencies: The Case of the Dadaab Refugee Camps.” *CIGI Policy Brief* 47 (2014): 3.

ranging catastrophic implications, millions of uneducated children are a problem simply because it is a violation of their human rights.

### *Research Outline*

The purpose of this research is to highlight the historical development of education for refugee children, through programs lead by Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), as well as to emphasize the importance of education as part of current humanitarian interventions. This thesis examines a past example of children as refugees, focused on Jewish children located in displacement camps in the aftermath of the Holocaust, and how the issue of their education was handled by newly-formed IGOs. Archival documents from the United Nations refugee agencies (first under the U.N. Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, and later the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees) will serve as primary sources for this portion of the thesis. Legal frameworks are explained in regard to how international law protects the rights of child refugees, as well as theories of educational pedagogy. Publications by IGOs, including situation reports and field operation guidelines, will be primary sources relating to Syrian refugees presently. Contemporary examples of child refugees are used in this thesis, not only to emphasize the continuing importance of this issue, but as a call to action for anyone who reads this and wishes to make a difference in the world. There are many ways an individual can help a refugee child be educated, ranging from donating money or time to one of the organizations to be discussed, to advocating that governments dedicate more funds to educational programs. One of the most important ways anyone can help is to share information with other people to ensure these children are not forgotten, overlooked, or lost in the shuffle of day to day life.

### *Framework, methods, and limits*

The theory of constructivism is greatly attributed to psychologist Jean Piaget. He stated that people develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through their own experiences, and promoted learning through action: “When we encounter something new, we have to reconcile it with our previous ideas and experience, maybe changing what we believe, or maybe discarding the new information as irrelevant.”<sup>5</sup> Piaget found that through the processes of assimilation (when new information fits into an already created perspective) and accommodation (when an experience reframes an individual's point of view) people are able to actively “construct” knowledge. To take the idea of constructivism even further, social constructivists believe that the process of “collaborative elaboration”, where individuals share their perspectives with one another, allow people to reach an understanding that would not be possible on one’s own.<sup>6</sup> The epistemological theory of constructivism has heavily influenced the way in which this thesis was undertaken.

This truly is an interdisciplinary study, and draws on research methods used by historians and sociologists alike. In terms of the historical aspects of this thesis, textual analysis of both primary and secondary sources are key. This is done with publications from early United Nations agencies, and secondary sources, like scholarly pieces and journalistic accounts. As the thesis moves into the contemporary, primary source text analysis is still quite a large portion of the research. Library and internet searches yielded the sources which the data for this project was col-

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<sup>5</sup> WNET New York, “Workbook: From Concept to Classroom- Constructivism as a Paradigm for Teaching and Learning.” <http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/constructivism/>.

<sup>6</sup> Peggy van Meter and Robert Stevens, “The Role of Theory in the Study of Peer Collaboration.” *Journal of Experimental Education* 69 (2000): 123.

lected, as well as some materials that were suggested by professionals in both the education and humanitarian aid fields.

The research conducted was purposefully constrained in several ways. First, only educational programs focused on children legally classified as refugees are a part of my research.

While there are 10 million children worldwide who meet the requirements to obtain refugee status, there are millions more whose educations are interrupted or incomplete because they are internally displaced (uprooted from their homes, but unable to leave the boundaries of their home countries), stateless, or are used as child soldiers or are victims of human trafficking. One day, I hope to examine how their human right to education can be fulfilled, but the scope of this research is limited to refugees. Data on educational programs benefitting children living in formal, United Nations-run refugee camps are included in this research, because of the wealth and variety of the U.N.'s records. Nearly 50% of all refugees live in host communities opposed to formal camps, but data from that part of the population is often not updated, if collected at all. There are two main agencies that have their programs focused on, being the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). These were chosen because of their worldwide scale and the availability of data.

As mentioned, two symbolic refugee populations are examined: Jewish children after the Holocaust and Syrian children of the present. The aftermath of the Holocaust represents one of the first internationally documented refugee crises; Syria one of the most recent. The juxtaposition of historical and contemporary is in the hope that progress will be observable, and is presented in a context that most readers have some knowledge of already. In examining the Syrian refugee population, this thesis focuses on two camps in Jordan: Azraq and Za'atari. In addition

to Za'atari being the second-largest refugee camp in the world, other neighboring countries such as Turkey and Lebanon do not have U.N.-operated camps for Syrian refugees, which is the reasoning behind Jordanian camps being the center of this research. Educational opportunities for child refugees who have been resettled are discussed as well, with my personal experience as a part of the International Rescue Committee in Tukwila, Washington being the focus. Only around 1% of refugee are resettled in another country, but it is important to show that even if resettled, refugee children still face unique educational challenges.

The driving force behind this study is to show that progress has been made, but there is still work to be done. This goal operates in conjunction with the community and social change aspect of the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies program, which states that “whether one seeks knowledge for utilitarian ends or to achieve a richer understanding of the world, we all must live and act.”<sup>7</sup> Every person that comes across this thesis has the ability to contribute to a better future for millions of refugee children, and the hope is that after having the necessary information and options presented to them, they will take action.

### *Criteria for Evaluating Case Studies*

Three themes were identified throughout my research, and are applied in terms of the success or failure of educational programs: accessibility, teacher training, and community benefit. The existing literature pertaining to human rights theories and pedagogical best practices to be discussed provides a solid knowledge base in which examples of educational programs for refugee children are evaluated.

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<sup>7</sup> University of Washington, Tacoma Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies, “What is public action?” <https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sias/mais>.

The theme of accessibility first highlights the importance of location. For a program to be successful, it must exist in a physical space. The site of the program must be in close proximity (preferably within walking distance) from the living quarters of the students, and classes must be open to all genders and ages. This theme is drawn from various articles mentioned in the UDHR, 1951 Refugee Convention, the ICESCR, and Convention of the Rights of the Child, which mandate that education is a human right for all people and everyone has the right to pursue learning opportunities. A large part of determining the success of a program hinges on how accessible it is to the students who need the service: if a classroom or learning space is not able to be reached easily, it cannot reasonably be considered a useful or successful endeavor. More nuanced aspects of this requirement looks to issues of safety and gender roles. Learning spaces inherently must be safe, and the students must feel safe, as well. Even if they are geographically removed from the areas of violence which the refugee students have fled, education programs must also protect children from bullying by their peers or other camp residents. The programs must also be equally accessible to both male and female students, and not place any emphasis on educating one gender over another.

The issue of teacher training is highlighted numerous times in current literature, and is present in the forthcoming case studies, as well. Teachers who will be leading classrooms made mostly (if not completely) of refugee students need to undergo specialized and rigorous training. They need to be prepared to educate students who have had their schooling interrupted and often are not at the learning level of peers of the same age, and who also have gone through traumatic experiences. Some teachers find that they have a difficult time performing their duties when their students' trauma begins to affect them on a personal level. Without proper training, teachers

cannot be expected to succeed in educating their students in the face of unique challenges that refugees often face, so programs that focus on developing and preparing their teachers will understandably be more successful.

The community benefit criteria comes from social contract theory, and is based on the idea that a successful education program will benefit its students and the surrounding community. The need for education goes beyond just learning facts and figures, but giving children the skills to employ their knowledge in ways that will develop the world around them. In providing children with educational opportunities, they learn how to adhere to the social contract of their community, how to be better members of society, and have the opportunity to improve their communities. In the case of many refugee students, this means creating more peaceful places to live.

These criteria are used to assess the two examples of educational programs for refugee students on their level of success and effectiveness. The case studies provide an historic and a contemporary example of child refugees, and their assessments bring to light what has been learned over the past seventy years, and what still needs to be improved upon. The three points on which each case is assessed work in tandem in order to provide the most comprehensive understanding of what a successful educational program would include. A program needs to meet all of the criteria in order to be considered successful; it truly is an all-or-nothing situation. If a program is deemed to be easily accessible, but does not prepare its teachers for the unique challenges that face refugee students, or does not also benefit the greater community in any way, overall it will not be viewed as a success.

The forthcoming discussion of existing literature on legal frameworks, educational strategies and best practices, and human rights theories provides a knowledge base for which the rest of the thesis will build upon. Once the legal, historical, and theoretical contextual foundation has been laid, the specific case studies are examined and analyzed, and the conclusion of this thesis focuses on the areas of refugee education that can still be improved.



## Literature Review

### *Legal Protections for Refugees under International Law*

While the phenomenon of people fleeing their homes due to war or persecution has not been limited to modern times, the emergence of refugees as a recognized population began early in the twentieth century. The League of Nations established a Commission for Refugees in 1921, with the immediate intent of helping hundreds of thousands of Russian citizens who were displaced during that country's revolution (1917-1921).<sup>8</sup> The director of this commission was Fritjof Nansen, a Norwegian scientist, explorer, diplomat, and humanitarian, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for the creation of the Nansen Passport, an internationally recognized refugee travel document.<sup>9</sup> The Nansen International Office for Refugees essentially took the lead from the League Commission in 1930, and in 1933 succeed in adopting an international refugee treaty, signed by fourteen nations.<sup>10</sup>

The League of Nations formally disbanded in 1946, and the United Nations was created the same year, along with the International Refugee Organization (IRO). The IRO was established as a temporary U.N. organization, with the express purpose of resettling or repatriating millions of WWII refugees. The United Nations facilitated the creation and adoption of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which outlined the basic freedoms and rights afforded to all human beings, simply by virtue of being alive. Among the most foundational of

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<sup>8</sup> Gilbert Jaeger, "On the history of the international protection of refugees." *International Review of the Red Cross* 83 (2001): 727.

<sup>9</sup> "Documents from the League of Nations Archives." *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 22 (2003): 71.

<sup>10</sup> League of Nations, "Convention of 28 October, 1933 relating to the International Status of Refugees." Treaty Series Vol. CLIX No. 3663.

freedoms included in the UDHR are the rights to “life, liberty, and security of person” and equal protection under the law, as well as the explicit prohibition of slavery, cruel and unusual punishment, and torture.<sup>11</sup> Education is also listed among the most fundamental of human rights; Article 26 plainly states everyone has the right to education.

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.<sup>12</sup>

The drafters of the UDHR understood the important role that education has in leading to a better future, and in helping to prevent wars like the ones endured during the first half of the twentieth century. The United Nations also created an organization specifically dedicated to assisting children in the aftermath of WWII, which is known as the International Children’s Emergency Fund, or UNICEF. The organization became a permanent part of the U.N. system in 1953, and currently operates in 190 countries.<sup>13</sup>

Once it was clear that refugee populations were still going to need support after the conclusion of WWII, a new organization was created: The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Again, the UNHCR was intended to be a short-term program, originally having a mandate to operate until 1951. That year, a foundational refugee treaty was created, called the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. This convention provided the

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<sup>11</sup> “Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” United Nations General Assembly Resolution 217. December 1948. Articles 1-7. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.

<sup>12</sup> “UDHR” Article 26, section 2.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, “Who We Are.” <http://www.unicef.org/about/>.

legal definition of what constitutes a refugee, as well as the rights and protections guaranteed to them as a matter of international law.<sup>14</sup> After the adoption of this treaty, the UNHCR's mandate was updated, and the organization continues to operate, serving as the United Nation's principal refugee authority.

As was previously mentioned, the 1951 Refugee Convention established the legal definition of a refugee as any person who has a:

[W]ell- founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.<sup>15</sup>

The 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocols are still the guiding principles in international law regarding the rights of refugees over half a century later. The Convention states that refugees are entitled to the same treatment as other visitors to a country at minimum, and in some instances, the same treatment as citizens.<sup>16</sup> A key component of the 1951 Convention is Article 33, which is the principle of non-refoulment. According to this principle, a refugee cannot be forced to return to their country of origin when they still are in danger of persecution or violence.<sup>17</sup> Non-refoulment is considered a rule of customary international law, meaning that regardless of whether a state has adopted the Convention, they must abide by this principle.<sup>18</sup> Other rights and

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<sup>14</sup> UNHCR, "History of the UNHCR." <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646cbc.html>.

<sup>15</sup> "Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees." United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2198. Article 1, Section 2A. <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html>.

<sup>16</sup> UNHCR, "The 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocols." <http://www.unhcr.org/4ec262df9.html>.

<sup>17</sup> "1951 Convention," 4.

<sup>18</sup> "1951 Convention," 5.

protections afforded to refugees under the 1951 Convention are the right to work, housing, public relief and assistance, freedom of religion, access to courts, right to travel and identity documents, and the right to education under Article 22.10. This article states that “all refugees have the right to receive the same elementary education as the citizens of the country of refuge, and education that extends beyond elementary level is required to be as favorable as any other non-resident.”<sup>19</sup>

Almost twenty years after the creation of the UDHR, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 16, 1966.<sup>20</sup> Article 13 of this document states that every person is entitled to “free education” at the elementary level, for education allows “the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and enables all persons to participate effectively in society.”<sup>21</sup> Over 160 nations have ratified this agreement; the United States is not among them.<sup>22</sup> With the adoption of this covenant, however, its signatories agreed to the idea that education is a human right, and in fact is necessary to realize other human rights.

Fifty years after the UDHR, the international community adopted a treaty with regards to human rights as they specially apply to children, called the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was put into force in 1990. Article 28 of this treaty deals with the right to education, and requires that states “make primary education compulsory and available free to all.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> “1951 Convention,” 4.

<sup>20</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.” <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>.

<sup>21</sup> “International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.” Article 13 Section 1.

<sup>22</sup> “International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.”

<sup>23</sup> OHCHR, “Convention on the Rights of the Child.” <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>.

Every member of the United Nations is a party to this treaty, with the exception of the United States.<sup>24</sup>

Prior to World War II, there were no legal frameworks or guiding principles focused on human rights or the right of all children to be educated. Over the last seventy years, however, such documents and treaties have been created, adopted, and enforced around the world. There are several theoretical approaches that support these documents and further our understanding of the importance and necessity of human rights. A brief introduction to these theories serves to increase the contextual knowledge beneficial to this discussion.

### *Human Rights Theories*

One of the most prominent theories linked to this research comes from Dr. Henry Shue, and is the idea of basic rights. Shue postulated that there are certain human rights that must be possessed by an individual in order to enjoy any and all other human rights. These subsistence rights are “everyone's minimum reasonable demands upon the rest of humanity.”<sup>25</sup> This theory is used in arguing that education is one of these basic rights; much like food, medicine, and shelter, education is necessary for an individual to move forward in their life and take advantage of all other human rights. If a person is not educated, freedom of religion and speech, the right to work, and the right to property cannot be fully enjoyed. In fact, the Centre for International Governance Innovation used this very reasoning in their 2014 report detailing education programs in the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya:

Education in emergencies is key to human development and protection,

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<sup>24</sup> “Convention on the Rights of the Child.”

<sup>25</sup> Henry Shue, *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 19.

but has not been a priority in humanitarian aid. It is grossly underfunded globally and particularly in the Dadaab refugee camps...Funding for education should be added to all humanitarian appeals, and include education as the fourth core pillar of humanitarian aid.<sup>26</sup>

There is an argument amongst human rights theorists concerning the “hierarchy of rights,” where some claim that social and economic rights are not as important as civil or political rights. This point of view is often countered by the idea that the necessity of human rights in the first place is to provide one with “a life of dignity”, not just to exist. The purpose in recognizing human rights is that a life worth living is no more possible without food, medicine, or shelter than without the freedom of religion, political beliefs, protection from frivolous arrest or punishments, or education.<sup>27</sup> This line of thinking allies itself with the notion that education in a time of crisis is not *more* or *less* important than shelter, food, or protection, but is *equally* needed. Dr. Tristan McCowan of the Institute of Education at University College, London, argues that “education’s role in supporting democracy, world peace, and preservation of community culture” highlights its necessity. Involvement is needed on a larger scale, rather than limited to people who are directly impacted by conflict or displacement.<sup>28</sup>

The social contract is another philosophical idea that often finds itself being used in support of education:

Based on the idea of the social contract...people would have no reason for endorsing the society in which they live if they were not granted certain benefits...the deprivation involved in its denial is such as to invalidate the claim that someone may be denied this benefit and still

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<sup>26</sup> MacKinnon, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Jack Donnelly, *International Human Rights* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2013): 23.

<sup>28</sup> Tristan McCowan, *Educational as a Human Right: Principles for a Universal Entitlement to Learning* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013): 49.

reasonably be expected to keep the law and observe the rules of the moral community.<sup>29</sup>

Often the most difficult part of getting others to understand the importance of education for all children, including refugees, is that they feel that the issue is too far removed from them to make any difference. The suffering of refugees is foreign to most people, both in the literal geographic sense and the fact that the terror of being forced to flee one's home is hard for some to imagine. They might feel that, while it is regrettable, it will not affect their life either way if a refugee child receives an education. When framed in the idea of the social contract, it does make it easier for an individual to accept that this is a problem that can and will affect their lives. We are members of one global society, and our futures are inextricably linked.

Much like this brief introduction to human rights theories, a discussion of teaching concepts and best practices also expands upon the contextual knowledge useful to the topic of this thesis. Each student has their own unique challenges and obstacles when it comes to learning, and refugee children are no different. There is an expanding collection of scholarly work dedicated to educating refugee children, and a portion of this literature is summarized in the forthcoming section of this thesis.

### *Educational Strategies and Pedagogy*

The most common and reoccurring theme within books and articles about the education of refugee students is the claim that there is definite shortage of scholarly work on the subject.

Richard Hamilton, the author of a guidebook for teachers with refugee students, argues

While there is a large and diverse body of literature on refugees that addresses social, medical, political, linguistic, and educational issues,

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<sup>29</sup> McCowan, 51.

there is a paucity of material specifically concerned with refugee children; of this, only a small proportion is about school-based interventions and programmes.”<sup>30</sup>

This is to be expected, as the conflicts that create refugee populations continue and new conflicts arise, it can be difficult for the academic community to produce scholarly work at the speed in which it is needed to remain current. Every source also agrees this is a topic of growing importance, for without any solution to conflict in sight, the need to adapt educational practices to best assist refugee children increases. Hamilton elaborates on the idea that refugee education is essential: “With the world on the move in a way it never has been before, refugee children are becoming an identifiable and increasing group in today’s schools.”<sup>31</sup> Other reoccurring themes include a focus on the resilience of students rather than their troubles, the need for a strong support or guidance system, and the incredible importance of teacher training.

One of the driving factors behind each section in Hamilton’s book is the incorporation of loss and grief experienced by all refugees and how it is more beneficial for educational practices to focus on the resilience of students, rather than their prior traumas. That is not to say that trauma suffered by refugee students should be completely overlooked, though. It has been found that, generally speaking, refugee children have an easier time adapting to new environments than adults, but there are still factors that increase the risk children will suffer from some kind of developmental delay as a result of forced migration. Hamilton states “both traumatization and uprooting can interfere with their psychological development because they lack the necessary

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<sup>30</sup> Richard J. Hamilton, *Educational Interventions for Refugee Children: Theoretical perspectives and implementing best practice* (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2004), 2.

<sup>31</sup> Hamilton, 1.



foundation of safety and security to achieve emotional, cognitive, and behavioral competence.”<sup>32</sup>

There is a delicate balance between acknowledging that a refugee student has experienced trauma and dwelling on their traumatic experiences.

Laura McCluskey highlights an interesting study on the emotional, behavioral, and psychological components of refugee students’ personalities, and the results suggested that while these students had gone through unimaginable trauma, it cannot automatically be assumed that they will be “problem students”. This study evaluated

Fifty-two Cambodian high school students living in the United States, and selected 40 for a follow-up who had reported living under the Pol Pot regime for an average of 4 years. These students all saw evidence of murder and abuses in concentration camps, almost half had directly witnessed homicides, and seven had been present during the murder of their own family members. Half of these participants met the diagnostic criteria for PTSD... in addition almost half met the criteria for other clinical problems, notably anxiety disorders and depression. There were no cases of substance abuse, delinquency, or conduct problems. Only 15% had poor academic performance, and few displayed school behavior problems.<sup>33</sup>

This study reinforces the claim throughout relevant literature that instead of focusing on the events that made the students refugees and their past trauma, their ability to remain motivated to learn and function socially should be much more important. The idea that refugee students’ not have their identities homogenized, or reduced to simply just being a refugee, is incredibly important. Amanda Keddie addressed this in an article published in the *Cambridge Journal of Education*, where she wrote that “a focus on issues of disadvantage within refugee education tends to construct refugee students as victims...this construction disregards the complex realities

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<sup>32</sup> Hamilton, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Laura McCluskey, “Psychosocial problems in refugee children exposed to war”. *Pediatrics* 7 (1996): 395.

of these students' lives and, in particular, refugee students' high levels of determination, courage and strength."<sup>34</sup>

One of the most effective ways to ensure that this balance between trauma and resilience is upheld is to dedicate more time and resources to teacher training programs. Teachers can often be one of the only connections children make when they arrive in their country of refuge. They need to be aware of the ways in which their students' traumatic experiences may manifest in the classroom, without focusing solely on past trauma.<sup>35</sup> Refugee children are a growing population in schools around the world, and at times teachers themselves can be emotionally affected by their students' pasts. A school in Queensland, Australia was the subject of an article written by Sophie Yahilo that revealed the need to train teachers how to adjust to having refugee students in their classrooms. One staff member described hearing a child's trauma story as helping her to better understand the child and to appreciate that the child felt comfortable to talk. At the same time, however, she felt herself overwhelmed by the content. Another staff member mentioned feeling unprepared and somewhat apprehensive of her own response when she would hear similar stories. In such cases, staff alluded to the fact that nurturing hope has a flip side where staff need to be prepared to face despair. In fact, to help sustain their own hope, program staff had received ongoing support from their staff psychologist.<sup>36</sup>

A significant improvement needed is to realize that teachers as well as students need preparation and support. Progress has been made on developing a system that teachers can use

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<sup>34</sup> Amanda Keddie, "Refugee education and justice issues of representation, redistribution and recognition". *Cambridge Journal of Education* 42 (2012): 200.

<sup>35</sup> Hamilton, 30.

<sup>36</sup> Sophie Yahilo, "Nurturing hope in refugee children during early years of post-war adjustment". *Children and Youth Services Review* 32 (2010): 869.

when educating refugee students known as the “Minimum Standards on Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises, and Early Reconstruction”, which was developed through interagency collaboration.<sup>37</sup> Partnership between IGOs and NGOs has greatly increased the quality of educational programs available in refugee camps and teacher training standards.

Based on the development of legal frameworks, human rights theories, and educational strategies, an understanding of what is needed to fulfill refugee children’s right to education can be ascertained. Key elements of a successful educational program include easy access and availability, teacher preparedness, and benefits to the greater community. These criteria were determined to be of importance through examination of current literature and analysis of historic and current refugee crises, and are further explained in the following sections focused on post-WWII Germany and present-day Jordan.

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<sup>37</sup> Eldrid Kvamen Midttun, “Cape Town – new impetus for networking”. *Forced Migration Review* 22 (2005): 4.

## Case Study: Jewish Children in Displacement Camps after WWII

### *Preface: WWII and the Holocaust*

Historians cite September 1, 1939, the day Germany invaded Poland, as the beginning of World War II. The Holocaust, however, started before the war began, and its causes date back hundreds of years in European history. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. defines the event as

[T]he systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators... During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived "racial inferiority": Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.<sup>38</sup>

This event did not happen spontaneously, but as described by historian Marilyn Harran, was “the most profound expression of the anti-Semitism that had flourished in Germany and other European nations for centuries.”<sup>39</sup> Without going back hundreds of years into this history of racism, a good place to start is earlier in the twentieth century with the conclusion of the First World War.

Germany came out of the World War I in shambles. The nation was blamed by the world for starting the war, and as a consequence was forced to pay for it, literally. The Versailles Treaty ordered Germany to pay monetary reparations to cover the cost of years of fighting to victorious nations, which lead to numerous internal troubles. The 1920s were a decade fraught with widespread unemployment, currency devaluation, political unrest, and increasing instances of vio-

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<sup>38</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Introduction to the Holocaust.”  
<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005143>.

<sup>39</sup> Marilyn Harran, *The Holocaust Chronicle*. (Morton Grove, IL: Publications International Ltd, 2000), 13.

lence.<sup>40</sup> This atmosphere of tension and unrest allowed for changes to take place in German society that would put the nation on a path toward new leadership and new ways of thinking. Historian George Mosse claims that “the theory of racism (antisemitism) had already penetrated important groups and made its impact upon the popular consciousness. But it was the war and its aftermath that would transform the theory into practice.”<sup>41</sup> One group that openly spoke out about their dissatisfaction with the government and the Versailles Treaty was the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP), which became known as the Nazi Party. The Party’s initial goal was to have the Versailles Treaty thrown out, until 1933 when they took control of the German government.<sup>42</sup>

The NSDAP was founded in 1920 by Anton Drexler, but soon Adolf Hitler rose in the ranks and took command in 1921. Hitler worked quickly, and the small NSDAP grew its membership to millions. Though the party never won a clear majority in German elections, “by 1933, [Hitler] had manipulated the democratic process so skillfully that he was named chancellor. A year later, Hitler assumed absolute, dictatorial control of the German government.”<sup>43</sup> Once the Nazis were in control of the country, change came swiftly.

Initially new laws were passed that restricted the amount of property Jewish citizens could own, the types of professions they could work in, how much money they could keep in their homes, and so on. In 1935, a series of legislation called the Nuremberg Laws came into

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<sup>40</sup> Harran, 13.

<sup>41</sup> George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1978), 171.

<sup>42</sup> Harran, 13.

<sup>43</sup> Harran, 13.

being that placed further restrictions on German Jews. Marilyn J. Harran edited *The Holocaust Chronicle*, an 800-page volume that details events from 1933-1946, and included excerpts of the laws themselves and explanations regarding their purpose. The Citizenship Law drew a fundamental distinction between “citizens” and “subjects”, according to Harran. “It restricted citizenship to those who were of ‘German or related blood’...The Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor immediately prohibited marriage between Jews and persons of German or related blood.”<sup>44</sup>

German Jews began to see their way of life, and even their very lives themselves, threatened by the Nazi government, and many attempted to leave the country. Some did so successfully, but as time went on, an increasing number of nations began to restrict their immigration programs. In 1938, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt gathered a group of world leaders in Evian, France, to discuss what could be done about the large number of Germans trying to flee.

To Jews, the anticipated Evian Conference seemed like a godsend... From July 6-15, 1938, delegates of 32 nations and representatives of 39 private relief agencies (21 of them Jewish) met, however, the national delegates, one after another, expressed sympathy for the Jewish refugees but also made excuses to say why their countries’ doors could not be opened.<sup>45</sup>

Four years later, another conference was held, this time by Nazi officials in Wannsee, Germany. The decisions made at this gathering lead to what became known as the Final Solution- the extermination of millions of Jews and other “undesirables” under Nazi control.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Harran, 86.

<sup>45</sup> Harran, 132.

<sup>46</sup> Harran, 13.

*DP Camps in Postwar Germany*

The war in Europe ended on May 8, 1945. Tens of millions of people, military and civilian, lost their lives. An estimated eleven million people were now refugees, uprooted from their homes with nowhere to return. Concentration camp survivors, as well as former German prisoners of war and slave laborers, now faced the reality that while the fighting was over, their lives would remain difficult and their futures uncertain. In the epilogue of *The Holocaust Chronicle*, Harran discussed how the displacement camps were formed. “Confronting the immense task of helping these needy people, the Allies classified the refugees as ‘displaced persons’ (DPs) and made the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) responsible for them.”<sup>47</sup> The UNRRA was an international organization, but despite its name, was not part of the modern-day United Nations governing body (that was not created until October 1945). In this case, “united nations” essentially meant “Allies”, therefore was made up of citizens from the United States, United Kingdom, France, and supporting nations.

One of the reasons there were so many DPs in Germany after the war was that immigration to other countries essentially came to halt. The United Kingdom accepted very few Jewish refugees into Palestine, and took action to prevent any illegal immigration. Other nations, including the United States, had tight restrictions in place, so those in search of refuge often did not find it.<sup>48</sup> Left with little other choice, these people were forced to stay in the newly created displacement camps, which in itself was often a traumatizing experience. These camps “had been

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<sup>47</sup> Harran, 580.

<sup>48</sup> Harran, 580.

quickly established at such sites as former Germany Army barracks, prisoner of war camps, and even concentration camps such as Bergen-Belsen and Dachau.”<sup>49</sup> Initially, the UNRRA was understaffed and severely lacking in the resources needed to assist the enormous number of DPs it was charged with; in many instances, military units ran the DP camps. Over time, organizations such as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), Organization for Rehabilitation through Training (ORT), and other Jewish relief agencies started to allocate resources with the goal of improving camp living conditions, as well as to create or improve learning and vocational opportunities.<sup>50</sup>

It is important to note that when DP camps were created after the war, there were no legal frameworks outlining how refugees should be treated, and the idea of human rights in general was quite new. What is now thought of as the basic decency with which all people should be treated essentially was formed in response to the horrors of the Holocaust and the World Wars. Modern treaties related to humanitarianism were created after World War II and the Holocaust, and this point is something to keep in mind while evaluating the success of this era’s DP camps in terms of the criteria outlined in this paper.

### *Accessibility*

One positive aspect of the educational programs provided in DP camps was the need for such services was recognized almost immediately, though not on an international or state-sponsored scale. It was in fact fellow DPs that set up the first classroom and learning spaces within the camps, not the camp administrations or aid groups. Hagit Lavsky wrote in his book that

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<sup>49</sup> Harran, 580.

<sup>50</sup> Harran, 581.



“camps in Germany were meant to be temporary, thus there were not resources, or even incentive, to invest in educational programs,” from the viewpoint of the camp organizers.<sup>51</sup> This was one of the ways in which DPs and the camp authority clashed, but was definitely not the only issue. In general, aid workers were concerned with adult DPs interacting with the children, largely because it was not known what kind of people these survivors were. UNRRA and even some of the Jewish aid workers thought that adult DPs might be too “emotionally unstable” because of the horrific trauma they had survived, and were uncomfortable in allowing them to interact with the children living in the camp at first.<sup>52</sup> To the benefit of the children, though, DPs with academic experience founded the first schools, although often they were not professional educators.

Classrooms generally were made of up very few students, and it was difficult to organize lessons based on age or what grade level a child was. The war had interrupted or prevented children from school, and for six years “deprived them of education and learning, save the knowledge of brutality and evil.”<sup>53</sup> There were two types of curriculum used by teachers at the camps, one secular and one religion-based. Survivors who were orthodox followers of Judaism established religious classes quickly, where the pedagogical aims were “spiritual and mental rehabilitation, shaping of a Jewish cultural identity, and preparing for life in Israel.”<sup>54</sup> Secular curricula also taught students about Jewish life and history, but also had lessons on mathematics, geogra-

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<sup>51</sup> Hagit Lavsky, *New Beginnings: Holocaust Survivors in Bergen-Belsen and the British Zone* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2002): 168.

<sup>52</sup> Margarete Myers Feinstein, *Holocaust Survivors: Holocaust Survivors in Post-War Germany 1945-1957* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 160.

<sup>53</sup> Lavsky, 168.

<sup>54</sup> Lavsky, 182.

phy, music, and gymnastics.<sup>55</sup> Materials were often limited, as one can imagine in a postwar setting. Eventually paper and pens were sent to the camps, but there were almost never any textbooks. Additional teachers made up of members of the Jewish Brigade arrived at the camps within a year of their operation.

Another clash between DPs and aid workers was over how the students' experiences with trauma were addressed. At the time, it was the general opinion among psychologists and educators that past traumatic experiences held by the children should not be brought up again. Relief workers thought memories of the Holocaust and the Nazis should be repressed, and that children should be taught to look toward the future. The DPs argued that children needed someone to talk to about their experiences in order to move past their trauma. In the end, the DPs point of view became more widely accepted; it is now understood that repression can lead to greater instances of post-traumatic stress disorder in children.<sup>56</sup>

In terms of accessibility, the programs were set up within the camps themselves, so students could learn in close proximity to their living quarters. The issue of traveling to classrooms was essentially non-existent within the DP camps, and they were open to children of all genders and ages, making the educational programs generally safe and extremely accessible. Children continued or began their academic educations represented a hope for the future for all Holocaust survivors.

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<sup>55</sup> Feinstein, 183.

<sup>56</sup> Feinstein, 186.

### *Teacher Training*

An area in need of improvement was the training international aid workers received before arriving at the DP camps. The requirements to be a UNRRA worker were vague, and best practices often differed based on the worker's home nation. American aid workers were trained under one set of guidelines, while British workers under another, French workers under yet another. There was very little training for new aid workers on how to interact with a person that was displaced or had suffered trauma, and divisions quickly formed between the helpers and the helpless.

Relief workers came to see the DPs as recipients and themselves as rescuers. This process blended old prejudices against people in need with new suspicions against displaced persons, and essentialized the difference between those who need assistance and those who give it.<sup>57</sup>

In the early days of international aid work, often "relief" was synonymous with "welfare", where material goods and services were substituted for providing those in need with a path to self-sufficiency. This led to such attitudes as described above, where workers did not view DPs as equals. General Patton was even quoted as referring to Jewish DPs as "sub-human, lower than animals."<sup>58</sup> Large scale humanitarian missions were new in post-WWII Europe, and while the

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<sup>57</sup> Sylvia Salvatici, "Help the People to Help Themselves': UNRRA Relief Workers and European Displaced Persons." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 25 (2012): 429.

<sup>58</sup> Daniel G. Cohen, "Between Relief and Politics: Refugee Humanitarianism in Occupied Germany 1945-1946." *Journal of Contemporary History* 43(2008): 447.

vagueness and inefficiency in training programs for relief workers can be understood, there were racial and nationalist prejudices that cannot have any place in such work.

Educational programs in DP camps were unsuccessful in adequately preparing teachers for the tasks they would face, although circumstances made this a difficult task. Because these programs existed in an immediately post-war space, the time and resources needed to prepare educators were nonexistent. DPs themselves were instrumental in getting these classrooms running, and did not necessarily have any background in teaching or education in the first place, much any organized training. The preparation that UNRRA workers received was very unstructured, and a more regimented and streamlined training program should have been implemented after several months of receiving feedback from those in the field.

### *Community Benefit*

Educational opportunities were incredibly valuable to the growth of adolescents who had survived the Holocaust, and often the classes “had to restore the faith and confidence in the adult world that these youngsters had lost during the war.”<sup>59</sup> This was beneficial for their community, as well. Going beyond academics, educational programs in DP camps also allowed children and teenagers, and even young adults, the opportunity to learn trades that could be used later, such as sewing, tailoring, and agricultural practices.<sup>60</sup> Programs and classrooms were set up in order to assist survivors not only in starting or continuing their educations, but to help get them back into a sense of normalcy after years of war and suffering.

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<sup>59</sup> Yad Vashem. “The Return to Life in the Displaced Persons Camps, 1945-1956.”  
[http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/dp\\_camps/index.asp](http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/dp_camps/index.asp).

<sup>60</sup> “The Return to Life.”

Since the conclusion of WWII, the amount of primary and secondary sources relating to the lives of DPs continues to grow, and allows for an easier analysis of the successes and failures of the educational opportunities available for refugee children after the Holocaust. Based on my analysis, DP camp educational programs were successful in two of the three criteria categories. When the camps first opened, there were no formal spaces dedicated to learning, but for being in a postwar setting, classrooms were established quickly. Educational programs were easily accessible to the children living in the camps, because they were in close proximity to their living quarters, and there were no documented instances of gender discrimination in terms of being allowed to join a classroom. The programs had a great benefit for the displaced Jewish community as a whole, because they allowed children to work toward achieving some sense of normalcy after unimaginable suffering. Educators leading these programs were not adequately trained, however, and often did not know how to cope when children manifested forms of post-traumatic stress disorder or other psychological/behavioral issues.

Of course, it is easy to look back and see what could and should have been done in this case. As was noted, during the operation of displaced persons' camps, there were no guiding principles for how to address the issue of refugees. That said, these camps provided a starting point in the development for educational programs aimed at helping refugee children. Seventy years later, there are numerous international treaties and agreements on the subject, and unfortunately, many more occurrences dealing with refugee populations. While certain strategies and best practices have been garnered from experience, putting these into practice is often easier said than done. The following case study- Syrian refugee children living in U.N.-operated refugee camps in Jordan- examines whether observable progress has been made.

## Case Study: Syrian Children in Jordanian Refugee Camps

### *Preface: The Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War*

In early 2011, a wave of pro-democracy demonstrations swept across the Arab world, and came to be known as the “Arab Spring”. Beginning in Tunisia, protests and calls for government reform spread to “virtually every Arab country, with major insurgencies in Syria, Libya, and Yemen, civil uprisings in Egypt and Bahrain, large street demonstrations in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, and Oman, and minor protests even in Saudi Arabia.”<sup>61</sup> From the beginning, however, it was clear that Syria was different, and peaceful protests quickly descended into a proxy war involving numerous foreign powers, lasting for over six years now, and producing the world’s largest refugee population.

Syria’s internal struggles have been complicated by a “multiplicity of actors who have a stake in the outcome of the conflict”, and what originally began as peaceful protests that devolved into a civil war is now an international conflict.<sup>62</sup> Mary Kaldor of the London School of Economics wrote that “the involvement of outside states, including Iran and Russia as well as Hezbollah on the side of the [Syrian] regime, and Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, Turkey, and Western powers, who back different opposition groups,” has only further intensified the violence.<sup>63</sup> Asli Bali and Aziz Rana agree, and in a piece for the Arab Studies Institute’s online journal *Jadaliyya*, stated “since international assistance began flowing to armed opposition groups in late

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<sup>61</sup> Malise Ruthven, “How to Understand ISIS”. NY Review of Books. June 23, 2016.

<sup>62</sup> Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel, *The Syrian Dilemma* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2013), 6.

<sup>63</sup> Hashemi and Postel, 150.

2011, the death and displacement to which civilians have been subjected has skyrocketed.”<sup>64</sup> To understand what sets Syria apart from the rest of the Arab Spring uprisings, one must take a look back at the last fifty years to gain perspective as to how the nation began down the path to war.

Hafez al-Assad seized power in 1970 after a military coup d'état, and ruled Syria “with an iron fist” until 2000, when his son Bashar became president.<sup>65</sup> The story of how Bashar al-Assad became the most powerful man in Syria was summarized in Reese Erlich’s book *Inside Syria*, which revealed that he was never intended to lead the nation.

Bashar was not supposed to follow in his father’s footsteps. The role was set aside for Basil al-Assad, Hafez’s eldest son. Bashar had become an ophthalmologist and was doing advanced studies in London when his brother died in a car crash. Bashar was called home in 1994 and was groomed for the presidency.<sup>66</sup>

Syrian citizens in many ways welcomed Bashar al-Assad as their new leader, because they thought he would usher in a new era of reform for their country. Due to his high level of education, his familiarity with Western society, and his genial disposition, Bashar was seen as a beacon of hope to the Syrian people and their desire to end decades of authoritarian rule. Unfortunately, many would be disappointed.

In the midst of the Arab Spring, police arrested several youths for writing anti-regime graffiti on the walls of a school in the southern city of Daraa. The preteens were beaten while in police custody, and the residents of Daraa responded with demonstrations. Government security

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<sup>64</sup> Hashemi and Postel, 31.

<sup>65</sup> Reese Erlich, *Inside Syria: The Backstory of their Civil War and What the World Can Expect* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2014), 20.

<sup>66</sup> Erlich, 20.

forces fired upon the protestors, and two were killed.<sup>67</sup> This was in March 2011, and was the beginning of the war in Syria. Erlich explains that originally, “They [demonstrators] wanted free elections, a parliamentary government, release of political prisoners, and the right to organize political protests. The government rejected these demands and responded with violent attacks. Within weeks, protestors were demanding the government’s overthrow.”<sup>68</sup> Soon protests were occurring in Damascus, the capital of Syria, and spread around the country. The demonstrations were “non-violent and secular”, but that was of little consequence; the government reacted to the protests with violence. Police and military forces fired their guns into groups of demonstrators, and those even suspected of participating in the protests were arrested and often tortured.<sup>69</sup> Syrians began crossing into neighboring countries as fighting between government forces and rebels intensified. In April 2011, over 5,000 people crossed into Lebanon, and in June people started to enter Turkey and Jordan.<sup>70</sup> Eastern Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley became the “principal destination in Lebanon for Syrian refugees, many of whom fled fierce fighting in nearby Homs, Quseir, Zabadani, and Hama,” despite it being a poor, agricultural region with few resources.<sup>71</sup> In 2012, a camp for Syrian refugees opened in the northern Kurdish region of Iraq, and Za’atari Refugee camp opened in Jordan.

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<sup>67</sup> Erlich, 82.

<sup>68</sup> Erlich, 15.

<sup>69</sup> Erlich, 83.

<sup>70</sup> Al Jazeera English, “Syrians find sanctuary in Jordan” July 12, 2011.  
<http://www.aljazeera.com/video/middleeast/2011/07/2011712175013150736.html>.

<sup>71</sup> Anne Barnard, “For Syrian Refugees, There is No Going Home.” New York Times, February 23, 2017.  
[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/23/world/middleeast/lebanon-syria-refugees-geneva.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/23/world/middleeast/lebanon-syria-refugees-geneva.html?_r=0).



Syria was further divided into areas still controlled by the government and those taken over by the resistance. The rise of the terrorist organization known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in 2013 led to portions of Syria falling into their control, as well.<sup>72</sup> In March 2013, two years after the initial fighting began, Syrian refugees numbered one million. That same month, UNHCR head (now U.N. Secretary General) Antonio Guterres remarked that this level of refugee outflow had not been seen since the Rwandan Genocide of the mid-1990s.<sup>73</sup> Nearly five million Syrians have fled their homes as the war persists, and neighboring countries like Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq host the greatest numbers of refugees.<sup>74</sup>

### *Education for Refugee Youth in Jordan*

Over 650,000 Syrian refugees were registered with the United Nations in Jordan as of 2016. Human Rights Watch published a report which stated that nearly one in three Syrian refugees who have fled to Jordan are under the age of 18, totaling 220,000 children. Of that number, one third did not receive any type of formal education in 2015.<sup>75</sup> Reasons for this disparity are discussed in relation to the criteria previously established, as well as how new issues have arisen within this refugee crisis.

The Jordanian government has recently taken steps to promote educational opportunities for Syrian refugee children. “The fundamental right of every child is their right to education, af-

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<sup>72</sup> “Islamic State and the Crisis in Iraq and Syria in Maps.” BBC News. December 22, 2016.  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27838034>.

<sup>73</sup> UNHCR, “UNHCR chief urges states to maintain open access for fleeing Syrians.” <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2013/7/51e55cf96/unhcr-chief-urges-states-maintain-open-access-fleeing-syrians.html>.

<sup>74</sup> UNHCR, “Syria Regional Refugee Response.” <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>.

<sup>75</sup> Human Rights Watch, “We’re Afraid For Their Future: Barriers to Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan.” 22.  
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/08/16/were-afraid-their-future/barriers-education-syrian-refugee-children-jordan>.

ter the right to life,” said the Minister of Education and Deputy Prime Minister, Professor Mohammad Thneibat. “We have opened our school doors to Syrian children as well as all other (children) living on the soil of Jordan regardless of their nationality or reasons why they are in Jordan.”<sup>76</sup> One such way the government has aimed to raise the number of Syrian children attending school has been by operating schools in shifts, where some students attend in the morning and others in the afternoon. Additionally, children who have been out of school for longer than three years are able to enroll in “catch-up classes to accelerate their learning.”<sup>77</sup> These efforts are encouraging; even though Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, it is still committed to caring for refugees residing within its borders.

For the children living in refugee camps, however, the situation is not quite as positive. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) operates two refugee camps in Jordan: Azraq, located east of the capital Amman, and Za’atari, which is just over the Jordanian-Syrian border. Nearly 80,000 people reside in Za’atari, making it the second largest refugee camp in the world.<sup>78</sup> In 2015, a lower percentage of Syrian children were enrolled in school in these camps than in host communities.

### *Accessibility*

One of the largest contributing factors involved in refugee children attending school in formal camps is whether opportunities are easy for them to access. According to the UNHCR,

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<sup>76</sup> UNHCR, “3RP Regional Monthly Update.” <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/3RP%20Regional%20Monthly%20Update%20-%20Dashboards%20-%20August%202016.pdf>.

<sup>77</sup> “3RP Regional Monthly Update.”

<sup>78</sup> UNHCR, “Za’atari Refugee Camp.” <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/settlement.php?id=176&country=107&region=77>.

there were 20,771 children enrolled in schools at Za’atari as of April 2016; however, there are 30,000 school aged children living in that camp.<sup>79</sup> In Azraq, 3,400 children were enrolled in school, “out of a total of 15,336 children.”<sup>80</sup> To quantify the situation in terms of how many refugee children are in need of educational opportunities and how many are able to take advantage of them highlights a gap that the United Nations must work to bridge.

There are multiple reasons why children living in the refugee camps do not attend school, as the U.N. learned through conducting numerous surveys of camp residents. It was reported that the most common barriers to education were long distances between home and school, and issues related to familial responsibilities.<sup>81</sup> A monthly update published by Human Rights Watch in mid-2016 further explained the barrier linked with traveling to school:

The distance to school from some parts of the sprawling Za’atari refugee camp, and the need for children to return home at night along dark, unlit paths during the winter, has also been one of the main obstacles to education there.<sup>82</sup>

UNICEF identified gender-specific reasons hindering school attendance within Za’atari, as well. In a 2014 Educational Needs Assessment, it was reported that students aged 12-17 were not attending school, or had dropped out, because they had to perform family duties or go to work. Nearly 10% of males in that age range stated they dropped out of school because they have to earn money; 12.6% of females reported that they no longer attend school because they need to

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<sup>79</sup> “We’re Afraid For Their Future,” 24.

<sup>80</sup> “We’re Afraid For Their Future,” 24.

<sup>81</sup> UNICEF, “Joint Education Needs Assessment 2014,” 25.  
[https://www.unicef.org/jordan/Joint\\_Education\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_2014\\_E-copy2.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/jordan/Joint_Education_Needs_Assessment_2014_E-copy2.pdf).

<sup>82</sup> “We’re Afraid For Their Future,” 73.

help run their households, or were about to be married.<sup>83</sup> Younger girls, aged 6-11, also stated that physical violence or verbal abuse while at school was a reason they did not want to attend.<sup>84</sup>

UNICEF has a large presence in the refugee camps, and is actively pursuing solutions to the problems of accessing educational opportunities. New schools are being built (three in Azraq and one in Za'atari), and other schools are expanding the number of classrooms.<sup>85</sup> UNICEF has also devoted ample resources to promoting their alternative education centers, called *Makani*, inside refugee camps. *Makani* means “my space” in Arabic, and these centers exist as a place for youth to receive many types of support. Makani centers are located in refugee camps and within communities across Jordan, and offer learning opportunities, as well as vocational skills training and psychosocial support services (PSS).<sup>86</sup> There are 21 Makani centers in Za'atari, and since 2015, the centers have reached more than 32,000 youths. There are scheduled activities, which range from art classes to team sports, and the goal is to give children a routine they can rely on. Often times, having a sense of structure helps the children return to a sense of normalcy not felt since they had to flee their homes.<sup>87</sup>

Currently, access to educational opportunities within refugee camps in Jordan cannot be categorized as a success; however, the situation does seem to be improving. With the construc-

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<sup>83</sup>“Joint Education Needs Assessment,” 25.

<sup>84</sup> “Joint Education Needs Assessment,” 25.

<sup>85</sup> UNICEF, “Situation Report, September 2016.” 9.  
[https://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF\\_Syria\\_Crisis\\_Situation\\_Report\\_Sept\\_2016.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF_Syria_Crisis_Situation_Report_Sept_2016.pdf).

<sup>86</sup> “Situation Report, September 2016.” 9.

<sup>87</sup> Armando Garcia and Morgan Winsor, “This Is Home: How Child Refugees in Za'atari Learn to Cope With New Life.” ABC News, September 18, 2016. <http://abcnews.go.com/International/home-child-refugees-zaatari-learn-cope-life/story?id=42093216>.

tion of new formal schools, and the presence of informal education centers, opportunities for children living in the refugee camps are increasing. Attendance rates are trending upward, as evidenced in a UNICEF Situation Report on Za’atari. In 2012, overall attendance for educational programs was at 22%, but that rate jumped to 51.3% in 2013.<sup>88</sup> Quantitative research done by the organization backs up the opinions of many parents and teacher in Za’atari that formal schooling has improved. The gender-specific issues discovered, however, will prove more difficult to remedy. When girls are being married young, or boys must work to earn a living for their family, the chance that they will finish their schooling drops significantly, thus highlighting cultural barriers to education with Syrian refugee camps.

### *Teacher Training*

Under Jordanian law, all public school teachers, whether in communities or refugee camps, must be citizens of Jordan.<sup>89</sup> This stipulation has made things exponentially more difficult for United Nations agencies that operate educational facilities within the refugee camps. Rather than the U.N. being responsible for training and preparing teachers work with refugee youth, the Jordanian Ministry of Education acts as the overseeing organization.

Human Rights Watch reported that “some teachers in refugee camp schools said they did not receive any teacher training, and only had to show they had graduated from university.”<sup>90</sup> Those who teach in the refugee camps, and who teach the second shift in community schools (in other words, teachers who exclusively have Syrian students) are hired on short-term contracts

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<sup>88</sup> “Situation Report,” 9.

<sup>89</sup> “We’re Afraid For Their Future,” 25.

<sup>90</sup> “We’re Afraid For Their Future,” 47.

and do not receive the same level of training or benefits that full-time teachers do. This has led some teachers to feel apathetic in regards to their refugee students. Jordanian teachers, as well as refugee parents, have voiced concerns about overcrowded classrooms and a lack of motivation from the teachers, most notably in Za'atari.<sup>91</sup> This environment would create problems for teachers, parents, and students in any community, but the fact these are refugee children further compounds the troubling issue of unpreparedness. "Teachers...in refugee camps said they found it difficult to teach some Syrian children who showed clear signs of trauma," and the lack of proper training for teachers in this circumstance has resulted in some students dropping out of school.<sup>92</sup> In this instance, the presence of Makani centers is extremely important, because they are staffed by United Nations employees, trained psychologists, and mental health counselors.

While there is much more to be done in terms of upgrading teacher training standards, the government of Jordan has so far implemented important changes. The Ministry of Education has allowed almost 200 Syrian refugees to assist Jordanian teachers in overcrowded classrooms with more than 45 students. The refugee teachers are able to help manage the classrooms better, and prevent the other teachers from becoming "burnt out" so quickly.<sup>93</sup>

### *Community Benefit*

While access to education and the training teachers receive have much room for improvement, it should be stated that the programs currently in place benefit the communities they serve greatly. The United Nations Education, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (UNESCO)

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<sup>91</sup> "We're Afraid For Their Future," 6.

<sup>92</sup> "We're Afraid For Their Future," 47.

<sup>93</sup> "We're Afraid For Their Future," 49.

published an article titled “Five Stories of Hope from Za’atari Refugee Camp” in the summer of 2016, which highlights some of the positive experiences children are gaining through both formal and informal education programs.<sup>94</sup> One featured story was that of 11-year-old Ayan, who watched as two of his friends were shot and killed. After that traumatic event, Ayan’s father decided that his family needed to leave Syria, and they moved to the Za’atari camp. Ayan was understandably traumatized; he had trouble paying attention while in school, and even became aggressive. He began to attend both informal education and psychosocial support classes, and over the course of three months, he became less anxious and was able to interact with his peers once more. “I barely ever skipped a day, I absolutely loved coming here,” Ayan proclaimed. He participated in exercises that lessened his anxiety, and introduced him to new friends, as well as strengthened his existing friendships.<sup>95</sup>

Perhaps most encouraging of all, Ayan praised his teachers and the adults that make these informal education opportunities possible. It is clear that, while more progress is needed, those involved in programs are having a positive impact on the vulnerable children they serve. “I want to be a teacher, just like my teacher Mr. Mahmoud. He made me feel loved and even respected,” Ayan explained to UNESCO interviewers.<sup>96</sup> Ayan’s experience exemplifies the potential educational programs provide refugee children with. Not only are they able to get back on track with their formal schooling, they learn how to be children again, and begin to set goals and look for-

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<sup>94</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, “Five Stories of Hope from Za’atari Refugee Camp.” [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/five\\_stories\\_of\\_hope\\_from\\_zaatari\\_refugee\\_camp/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/five_stories_of_hope_from_zaatari_refugee_camp/).

<sup>95</sup> “Five Stories of Hope.”

<sup>96</sup> “Five Stories of Hope.”

ward in their lives. No matter how the war ends, the future of Syria depends on children like Ayan being able to return home and rebuild their communities.

While the length of time spent in a refugee camps varies depending on the individual and their specific situation, presently Syrians are unable to return to their home country, and those who have reached refuge in Jordan are preparing for a long stay. The UNHCR reports that while there are over 133,000 people living in its two Jordanian camps, Za'atari and Azraq, there are another 500,000 Syrian refugees living in Jordan outside of the camps.<sup>97</sup> More often than not, these people will remain in Jordan until they are able to return to Syria; however, a small percentage will stay in Jordan permanently, and an even smaller percentage will be resettled in another country. The number of Syrians applying to be resettled has drastically increased, from 5,277 applications in 2013 to 139,142 in 2016.<sup>98</sup> Applications are distributed among UN member nations that participate in resettlement programs, essentially the nations that have ratified the Refugee Convention. The United States does participate in the U.N. refugee resettlement program, although the new presidential administration as of 2017 will no doubt influence whether this remains to be true in the coming years.

While resettlement is not an option for most refugees, in order to bring the global refugee crisis into focus on a local level, and to highlight how it is possible for educational programs to meet the previously discussed criteria for success, I find it important to share my time with the International Rescue Committee briefly in this thesis.

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<sup>97</sup> UNHCR, "Syria Regional Refugee Response- Jordan," <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107>.

<sup>98</sup> UNHCR, "Resettlement Statistical Database Portal," <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/resettlement-statistical-database-portal.html>.



## Refugee Education Post-Resettlement

### *The Resettlement Process*

When a person flees their country of origin, the first place they arrive is called the “country of first asylum.” Most refugees will remain there until they are able to repatriate. There are two other options for refugees, one being local integration, where a refugee will stay in the host country long term, after going through that nation’s requirements for citizenship; the other is to be resettled in a third country. The criteria for resettlement according to the UNHCR states that “the applicant must be determined to be a refugee by UNHCR, resettlement must have been identified as the most appropriate solution, and the applicant must fall under one or more of the UNHCR resettlement categories.”<sup>99</sup> Less than one percent of the world’s refugees will be resettled in the third country.

During the fiscal year 2016, the United States admitted approximately 85,000 people with refugee status, representing less than half of one percent of the worldwide refugee population (0.43%).<sup>100</sup> Perhaps the most confusing part of the refugee experience for Americans to understand is how people come to be resettled here. It is not a simple process by any means, and with recent political rhetoric convoluting the issue even further, a brief walk-through of the steps for admission is important. The main organization that processes refugee applications for resettlement is the Department of State, namely the Bureau for Populations, Refugees, and Migration. The UNHCR refers applications to the State Department, which then begins a lengthy process,

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<sup>99</sup> UNHCR, “UNHCR Refugee Resettlement Trends 2015,” 4.  
<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/agenda/2012/3/559e43ac9/unhcr-refugee-resettlement-trends-2015.html>

<sup>100</sup> United States Department of State, “Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2017 Report to the Congress,” September 15, 2016.  
<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/262168.pdf>.

detailed on the department's website. The National Counterterrorism Center, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of Defense (DoD) each play a part in the resettlement process through a procedure called vetting:

This screening checks for security threats, including connections to known bad actors, and past immigration and criminal violations. For Syrian applicants, DHS conducts an additional enhanced interview. Refugees are screened more carefully than any other type of traveler to the U.S.<sup>101</sup>

The data collected is transmitted to the Department of Homeland Security, which confirms the information, and conducts in-person interviews in the host-country. If any new information or inconsistencies are uncovered, the process for that applicant is put on hold until the issue can be resolved. Applicants are fingerprinted and run through biometric databases, and are subject to health screenings also performed by DHS. If these screenings do not present any concerns, the process continues.

There are nine resettlement agencies that operate in the United States (the International Rescue Committee among them). Representatives from these agencies meet and review applicant information to determine an appropriate location for the individual to be resettled. Once a decision is made, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) proceeds with booking travel arrangements. Applicants are again screened by US Customs and Border Patrol and the Transportation Safety Administration (TSA), and those with no security concerns are allowed to enter the United States. Upon arrival, each refugee is assigned to one of the resettlement agencies, which will assist them in settling into their new communities and starting their lives in the United States. Depending on the applicant's country of origin, current location, and other factors, the

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<sup>101</sup> United States Department of State, "US Refugee Admissions Program." <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/admissions/index.htm>.

total processing time from UNHCR referral to arrival in the United States is between 18-24 months.<sup>102</sup>

*The International Rescue Committee and the Tukwila School District*

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is an international non-governmental organization. In 1942, the European-based International Relief Association and the Emergency Rescue Committee joined to form the IRC in an effort to help millions of displaced people during World War II.<sup>103</sup> Currently there are IRC offices in 22 U.S. cities, including Seattle. The IRC in Seattle first opened its doors in 1976, and since then has provided newly resettled refugees with programs like “economic empowerment, community integration and development, health and wellness, and youth education.”<sup>104</sup> As a graduate student, I applied for an internship with the IRC’s School Readiness Program in April 2015, and was selected along with five other university students to participate. It was at our intern orientation where the refugee experience was first explained to me in-depth, along with the procedures that accompany the resettlement process, and some advice about working with refugee youth specifically. Our program coordinator had previously been an IRC volunteer in San Diego, and had just returned from her Peace Corps assignment to Rwanda, where she taught at an all-girls school for orphans. Her knowledge and guidance has been a large part of my continuing work with refugee youth.

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<sup>102</sup> “US Refugee Admissions Program.”

<sup>103</sup> International Rescue Committee, “History of the International Rescue Committee.” <https://www.rescue.org/page/history-international-rescue-committee>.

<sup>104</sup> IRC, “How does the IRC help refugees in Seattle?” <https://www.rescue.org/united-states/seattle-wa#how-does-the-irc-help-refugees-in-seattle>.

Our School Readiness Program began in July 2015. The IRC partners with the Tukwila School District, which generously allowed the program to be held at Showalter Middle School. We met Monday through Thursday from 8:00am until noon for six weeks. In total, there were 15 children, aged 6-17, whose families fled from Iran, Iraq, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. I kept a daily journal during my internship, both for academic and personal reasons. The names of the students, along with any other identifiers, were left out to protect their privacy.

### *Accessibility*

My days started by riding the commuter train from Tacoma to Tukwila, then taking two buses to reach the neighborhood in which my students lived. Each morning I was responsible for picking up my five secondary school students, along with one six-year-old. There were not sufficient resources at that time to provide a school bus or other mode of transportation for the students, so our group walked approximately one mile to a nearby middle school. There were two other walking groups, each traveling a mile on their journeys to the school, as well. The school was chosen as the location of the school readiness program due to its central location in relation to neighborhoods where the IRC resettled refugee families.

Part of the reason each student was picked up from their home was to ensure that they made it to the school safely. Their families had just arrived in the country, some of them less than a month prior, so they were completely unfamiliar with the area. Another reason for meeting the students at their home was in an effort to make sure they attended the program as often as possible. Rather than placing the responsibility on their parents to make sure the children got to school on time (or at all), the IRC entrusted this task to the interns. We had been subject to background checks before we were selected for the position, and we mapped out our walking routes with our

program coordinator prior to the beginning of the program to ensure the children's safety. As was evident in the first two examples, getting the children to school and doing so safely is often one of the most difficult tasks involved in educating refugee youth. Our program made a conscious effort to address this issue, and I was able to note in my journal that we had very consistent attendance rates through the duration of the summer.<sup>105</sup>

### *Teacher Training*

Although none of the interns were certified teachers, we did undergo a training session led by our program coordinator and the IRC's volunteer coordinator prior to the program beginning.<sup>106</sup> The goal of our program was not to teach the students new academic content as much as it was to orient them to the American school culture. We mainly ought to give them skills they would need to be successful students once the school year began. Teachers in the Tukwila School District do have specialized training available to them, which focuses on strategies that are helpful when a refugee student joins their classroom. Since the IRC and Tukwila Schools work in tandem, it is appropriate to briefly discuss how teachers in the district have approached refugee education in their schools.

At the conclusion of the 2015-2016 school year, Tukwila was named the most diverse public school district in the entire country by the New York Times, thanks in large part to its refugee community.<sup>107</sup> The demographics of students at Foster High School, the only high school in the district, reflect this diversity, with students that "speak more than 80 world languages at

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<sup>105</sup> Jessica Warner, IRC Internship Journal, August 6, 2015.

<sup>106</sup> Warner, July 2, 2015.

<sup>107</sup> "Diversity in the Classroom," *New York Times*, December 6, 2016.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/immigration/enrollment>.

home...about 40% are English Language Learners.”<sup>108</sup> The IRC works closely with the school district, which a Foster High School teacher explained to the *Seattle Times*:

The new kids started arriving in the mid-1990s, transforming what had been an overwhelmingly white school...First came the Bosnians and the Serbs, as well as Vietnamese, Laotians and Cambodians. That’s when the International Rescue Committee, which has an office less than a mile away, began settling refugees in Tukwila, where cheap housing was widely available. The most recent wave has brought [Somalis, Ethiopians, Eritreans] Burmese, Nepalese, Iranians and Iraqis.<sup>109</sup>

As was discussed in the literature review, working with such a diverse population, especially with children who have experienced great trauma, is a challenge for any educator. Foster High School principal Pat Larson, who came in the school in 2013, offered an answer to the tough problem of preparing teachers- “One hundred percent of our teachers said they were invested in these kids...If you’ve got teachers who are invested in the kids, all you have to do is wrap everything else around that.”<sup>110</sup> Several changes have been implemented in the ways teachers are prepared at Foster High School: increased collaboration between teachers is greatly encouraged, and the way teachers’ performance is evaluated has switched to a “coaching” support model. A consultant was also hired to work with the English department, and advanced placement teachers were offered additional pay to ensure they could devote all the necessary time to helping students succeed. Teachers are also encouraged to offer “office hours,” and make themselves available to

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<sup>108</sup> Tukwila School District, “Foster High’s soaring grad rate significantly increases again,” *News and Updates*, February 16, 2017. <http://tukwilaschools.org/2017/02/16/foster-highs-soaring-grad-rate-significantly-increases-again/>.

<sup>109</sup> Ben Stocking, “The revival of Foster High: School filled with refugees makes a comeback,” *Seattle Times*, January 18, 2017. <http://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/the-revival-of-foster-high-a-school-filled-with-refugees-makes-a-comeback/>.

<sup>110</sup> Stocking.

students outside of dedicated class time.<sup>111</sup> “One of the staff’s main jobs, according to Larson, is helping students from such backgrounds overcome their own formidable self-doubt to believe in their potential.”<sup>112</sup> Foster High School has seen almost immediate results. The graduation rate increased from 55% in 2014 to 70% in 2015, and test scores have skyrocketed. The Washington State Office of Public Instruction uses a 10-point scale to measure math improvement, and Foster received tens across the board.<sup>113</sup> While not all Tukwila School District students are refugees, the conclusion remains the same: better teacher preparation, however that can be achieved, will contribute to successful students.

### *Community Benefit*

The ultimate goal of the IRC’s School Readiness Program was to prepare refugee children to be successful in US public schools, but in the process of achieving that, students learned how to become members of a new community. Along with lessons on basic grammar skills, my group of secondary school students learned about the history of the United States, especially the struggle for civil rights. In addition to touring their prospective middle and high schools, we visited the local King County Library branch and the Tukwila Fire Department. Both the elementary and secondary students met other children from around the world, and were exposed to an amount of cultural diversity many had never experienced before.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Stocking.

<sup>112</sup> “Foster High’s Soaring Grad Rate.”

<sup>113</sup> Stocking.

<sup>114</sup> Warner, August 4, 2015.

The IRC's School Readiness Program and the Tukwila School District have been successful in meeting all of the criteria that the two case studies were assessed on. The summer program sent its interns to meet students at their homes each morning in order to ensure that all had a safe, reliable way to access learning opportunities in their new community. Refugee resettlement professionals oversaw the program and were responsible for training those involved in the School Readiness Program. Local teachers and members of the community helped to welcome the new students, and introduced them to important aspects of American life. Resettlement is not the solution that most refugee families will take part in, but for those who do, the transition for all members of the family is important to the International Rescue Committee. The School Readiness Program strives to prepare refugee students to attend their new school in the United States by helping them gain the skills to succeed academically and become well-adjusted members of their new communities.

Understandably, resources available to education programs in refugee camps are nowhere near comparable to those in an American public school district. The collaboration between certified teachers and NGO-affiliated workers in Tukwila has the potential to be implemented in the refugee camps, however, and is currently seen with the introduction of Syrian refugees as classroom assistants to Jordanian teachers. Continuing partnerships between IGOs, NGOs, charities, and education professionals have resulted in new strategies being used in the education of children living in refugee camps around the world.



## Conclusion

### *Education as the “Fourth Pillar of Humanitarian Aid”*

In the traditional sense of humanitarianism, there are three key elements, or pillars, included in providing aid: food, shelter, and health.<sup>115</sup> These are the basic necessities required as a part of every humanitarian mission undertaken by governmental or nongovernmental organizations. There are increasing calls for adding education as the “fourth pillar.” Nonetheless, there are some instances where education still is not seen as a priority in emergency situations, but as a “development activity”, which does not receive much funding at all. In 2013, education received only “2.4 percent of humanitarian aid from the Consolidated Appeals Process.”<sup>116</sup> It is important to challenge the traditional ways of thinking about humanitarianism, and advocate for the inclusion of a fourth pillar, being education. One group that represents NGOs, the U.N. agencies, charities, private donors, and academic institutions in matter of education is the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). Together with representatives from several governments, the INEE created a set of minimum standards for the education sector, and have sought to introduce conflict-sensitive educational curriculums, as well as focus on how education can alleviate conflict. These organizations, along with others previously mentioned in the case studies, are leading the way for educational programs to become a part of every humanitarian mission worldwide. Once the necessity for education is better understood by governments and donors (both public and private), the hope is that programs will be better funded and more widely available to reach all of the children in need of them.

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<sup>115</sup> Mackinnon, 3.

<sup>116</sup> Mackinnon, 4.

Educating refugee children is vital to the future of all human beings, and is mandated by international law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Refugee Conventions and Protocols, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and the Convention of the Rights of the Child collectively guarantee the right to education for every child in the world. Even with these guarantees, the reality is that millions of children have their educations interrupted, or are not able to receive any education due to displacement caused by war and conflict. A lack of education for refugee children is not only a humanitarian problem but can lead to a cycle of ignorance, poverty, and a lack of equity.

Work must continue to inform the public about the needs of one of the most vulnerable populations in our global society. In the seventy years since the conclusion of World War II and the Holocaust, the creation of intergovernmental organizations has improved the circumstances in which refugee children receive a basic education. There is still much to be done, however, and better solutions are becoming more urgent each day that war and violence plague our world, forcing millions from their homes. Educational programs must be a part of all humanitarian responses, and need to be better funded. At the 2015 Oslo Summit on Education for Development, then-U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon remarked that “right now, less than two percent of humanitarian aid goes to education. We have to do more to help children in crises.”<sup>117</sup> A special guest of the Secretary General at that summit was Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani teenager who was shot by the Taliban for advocating in support of girls’ education. She echoed the sentiments

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<sup>117</sup> United Nations Secretary General, “Remarks at the Oslo Summit on Education for Development.” <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2015-07-07/remarks-oslo-summit-education-development>.

of this thesis when she said, “Books are a better investment in our future than bullets. Books, not bullets, will pave the path towards peace and prosperity.”<sup>118</sup>

The two case studies featured in this thesis show that while learning opportunities for children living in refugee camps have developed and improved since the end of WWII, there are many barriers that still need to be overcome. Schools must be easily accessible and safe places for their students. Some children manifest the trauma they’ve experienced through violence and become bullies, in turn causing other children not to want to attend school, as seen in Za’atari Refugee Camp in Jordan. Teachers must receive the proper training by IGOs or NGOs to deal with this challenge and create safe learning environments for all their students. Family-centered issues have to be addressed, as well. Some children must work in order to support their family financially, and parents in some cases feel that their young daughters will be better taken care of if they get married instead of completing their education. In some protracted refugee situations, new generations of families are being born while residents of refugee camps, which exacerbates the challenges of displacement. Although the international community has recognized that education is a fundamental right, it is clear that more needs to be done to ensure that each refugee child receives the education they are entitled to.

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<sup>118</sup> International Network for Education in Emergencies, “Oslo Summit on Education for Development.” <http://www.ineesite.org/en/oslo-summit-on-education-for-development>.

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## The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

### Article 26

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

The entire document can be found at:

<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

## The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

### Article 22

1. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education.

2. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees treatment as favourable as possible, and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, with respect to education other than elementary education and, in particular, as regards access to studies, the recognition of foreign school certificates, diplomas and degrees, the remission of fees and charges and the award of scholarships.

The entire document can be found at:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/StatusOfRefugees.aspx>

## International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

### Article 13

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of this right:

- (a) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all;
- (b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;
- (c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;
- (d) Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education;

(e) The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

4. No part of this article shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principles set forth in paragraph I of this article and to the requirement that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

The entire document can be found at:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

## Convention on the Rights of the Child

### Article 28

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
- (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
- (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
- (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern

teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

The entire document can be found at:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

Map of Displaced Persons Camps in Germany

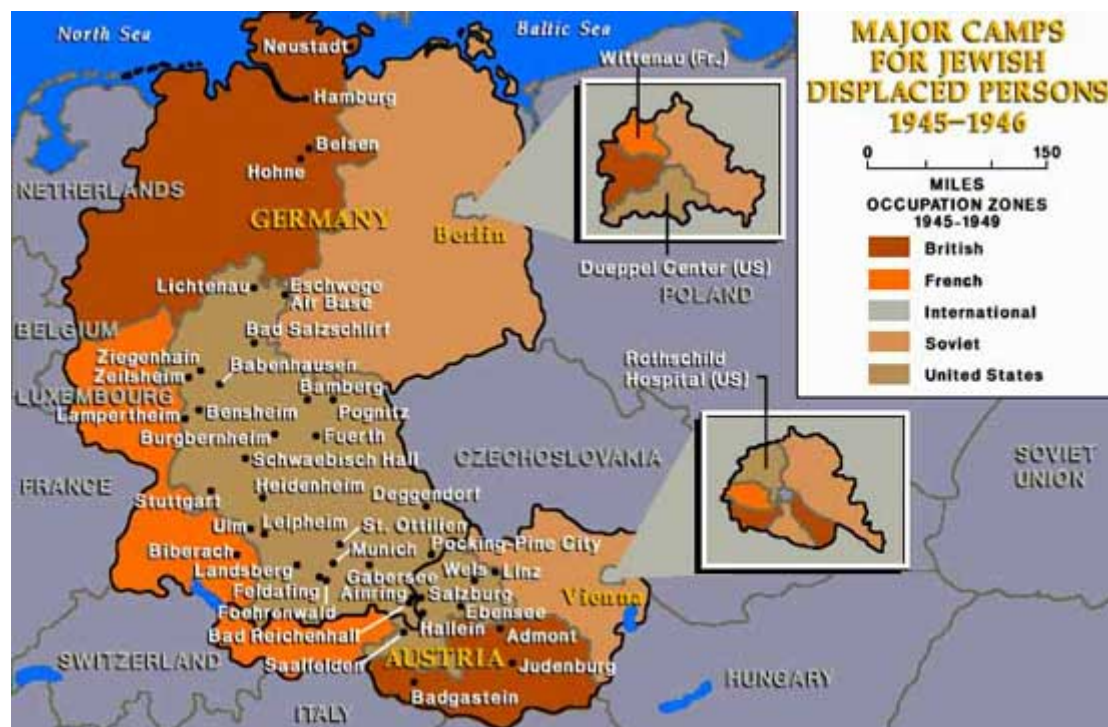


Image courtesy of the Jewish Virtual Library

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/camps-for-displaced-persons-in-germany-and-austria>

Map of Syrian Refugee Camps in Jordan



Image courtesy of UNICEF Canada

<http://www.unicef.ca/en/syrian-children-generation-at-risk>



Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2017

Report to the Congress, Table 1

**REFUGEE ADMISSIONS IN FY 2015 AND FY 2016  
PROPOSED REFUGEE ADMISSIONS BY REGION FOR FY 2017<sup>2</sup>**

<b>REGION</b>	<b>FY 2015 ACTUAL ARRIVALS</b>	<b>FY 2016 CEILING</b>	<b>FY 2016 PROJECTED ARRIVALS</b>	<b>PROPOSED FY2017 CEILING</b>
Africa	22,472	25,000	27,500	<b>35,000</b>
East Asia	18,469	13,000	14,000	<b>12,000</b>
Europe and Central Asia	2,363	4,000	4,000	<b>4,000</b>
Latin America/Caribbean	2,050	3,000	1,500	<b>5,000</b>
Near East/South Asia	24,579	34,000	38,000	<b>40,000</b>
Regional Subtotal	69,933	79,000	85,000	<b>96,000</b>
Unallocated Reserve		6,000		<b>14,000</b>
Total	69,933	85,000	85,000	<b>110,000</b>

The entire document can be found at :

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/262168.pdf>